1° Sept 1645.

21

ERROURS And INDURATION, ARE The *Great Sins* and the *Great Judgements* of the Time.

Preached in a SERMON

Before the Right Honourable Houſe of PEERS, in the Abbey-Church at *Weſtminſter*, July 30. 1645. the day of the Monethly Faſt:

By ROBERT BAYLIE, Miniſter at *Glaſgow*.

2 Theſſ. 2. 10, 11, 12. *Becauſe they received not the love of the Truth, that they might be ſaved; God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſions that they ſhould believe a Lye; that they all might be damned who believed not the Truth.*

Matth. 7. 15. *Beware of falſe Prophets, which come to you in ſheeps clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*

Matth. 15. 14. *Let them alone, they be blinde Leaders of the Blinde: and if the Blinde lead the Bliude, both ſhall fall into the Ditch.*

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FOR

The Equitable READER.

HOwſoever I have not adventured to offer unto the Right Honourable Houſe of Peers any Dedicatorie Epiſtle, having taken up alreadie ſo much of their pretious time, in their patient and favourable audience of my (prolix enough) Sermon: Yet preſuming upon thy courteſie, who ſhalt be willing to reade the ſubſequent Notes of that which to their Honours was preached, without any variation; I have made bold to ſpeak in thy eares (as the cuſtome is) ſome words of a Preface.

At the firſt inſtant of my calling to this ſervice, the words of my Text were caſt into my minde, where they remained without my leaſt inclination towards any other, till I had delivered from them what followeth. I have been for a long time in the opinion, that Errour and Induration are, albeit not the only, yet among the principall, both ſins and miſeries of this time and place.

The sinfulness of Induration.

Hardnesse of heart is ever a sinne, but then most sinfull, when most unseasonable. If ever there was a time to weep, this must be it, when not only the mouth of the Lord from his Word is calling, but his hand also from the Heaven is drawing us to it. He is a stubborn child, from whose eye the rod of the Father can draw no water: It is a hard stone which the hammer cannot break: It is a piece of unnaturall metall wich the fire cannot dissolve. And yet this is the complaint of the best discerning Christians every where, That though the Lord at this instant be dealing with us by the rod, the hammer, the fire of his judgements; we are so far from heart-melting, that in this extraordinarie and untimous hardnesse of our heart, more of the wrath and judiciall hand of God doth appear, then in any, or in all our judgements beside.

This plague of the Lord, on the spirits not only of the World, but of many his dear children, ought to be the subject of our deepest groans, and lowdest cries to the Heaven, whence alone the remedie of this our spirits disease can come: For there is but one Father, and one Lord, and one Physitian of the spirits of men. My weak endeavours towards this great Cure, must be fruitless, till his hand make the application of these prescriptions, which with all the faithfulnesse and care I was able for the time, I have collected only out of the book of his own method of Physick.

Error no lesse sinfull then vice.

As for the other evill of Errour; it hath been the studie and work of some here and elsewhere to extenuate the sinfulnesse thereof, and to arme the conscience of all they could perswade, against the sense of its burthen; as if the conscience ought to be impenetrable and secure from all wounds which vice and fleshly lusts doe not inflict. But I believe, if Errour and Vice were well weighed in the ballance of the Sanctuarie, though you put to vice the grossest aggravations, whereby the passions of the soul, and actions of the bodie make it justly abominable: yet if you will allow to Errour but the grains of its ordinarie circumstances, especially that one of our Text, Induration, its most familiar companion; it will be found to have such a weight of maliguitie, that if betwixt the two any inequality do appear, the sinfulnesse of the last will præ-ponder.

The intoxication of the spirit of the minde by the venome of

Errour,

Errour, is as much contrarie to the Divine Nature and Will, is as much hatefull to the Spirit of light and truth, and as evidently damnable, as the corruption of the will, and inferiour affections, or any member of the bodie with Whatsoever vice, or more bodily transgression. I hope I have proved this by places of Scripture unanswerable.

Whence it necessarily followeth, that it is more, at least no lesse unlawfull for a Christian State to give any libertie or toleration to Errours, then to set up in every Citie and Parish of their Dominions, Bordels for Uncleanneſſe, Stages for Playes, and Lists for Duels. That a libertie for Errours is no lesse hatefull to God, no lesse hurtfull to men, then a freedome without any punishment, without any discouragement, for all men, when and whereſoever they pleased, to kill, to steal, to rob, to commit adultery, or to do any of these mischiefs, Which are most repugnant to the Civill law, and destructive of humane societie.

Toleration of errours, a grievous sin.

But that which my Text points at in Errours, is not so much their sinfulneſſe, as their judgement; That God in his wrath had given over that people to errour. If ever the plague of erring from the wayes of truth was sent upon a land, it seems this day to lye upon us. The Finger of God in this our judgement, is demonstrable by divers Characters, imprinted upon the face of our present Errours, above all that in ordinarie (and not judiciall Errours) useth to appear. I point at four eminent singularities in them: Their various multiplicity, Their palpable evidence, Their incredible increase, and in the midst of universall complaints against them, A totall neglect of their cure.

The errours of our time appear to be judiciall.

First, their variety is prodigious; I cannot say that all which stand in the ancient Hereseologies of Philastrius, Epiphanius, *or* Augustine, *can be found among us, or were ever to be found upon Earth in any one age: But this may be confidently averred, That more Errours have set up their head, and shewed their mis-shapen countenances lately here, then in any one place of the world this day are known. I adde, that there is not any Errour spoken of in the places most infamous for that evill, whether* Amsterdam, *or* Pole, *or* Transilvania, *and if you please to joyn all the*

1. By their varicty.

three in one, but all are among us, and divers more, then in any of the places mentioned were ever heard of.

2. By their grosseneſſe.

Their evidence in this to me ſeems palpable; that however at their firſt appearance they did waken a great expectation, by their faire promiſes of New-Light, of New-found-Truths, of New-wayes leading to extraordinary pietie: yet after a little inſpection and commerce to un-ingaged and im-prejudicate mindes, they are found to be no other, but the very ſame dead karcaſes of old Hereſies and Schiſmes, which by the happie labours of the Reformed Divines in this and other Churches, lay buried in their grave of oblivion and abomination, till their late infauſt reſurrection.

The new-light of all our Innovators is nothing but old darkneſſe.

So it is in the Canterburians

That new Canterburian-Proteſtantiſme which the other day ſo much bewitched the Court and Country, is now ſeen to have been nothing but maſked Popery, but a high path-royall way to Rome, a Schoole of Idolatry, Hereſie, Treachery, and mercileſſe bloodſhed.

The Antinomians.

Theſe Goſpell-truths, theſe ſweet Sermons of Free-grace, that ſetting up of naked Chriſt on his Throne, which hath ſeduced ſo many thouſands of well-meaning ſouls, do now appear in their own colours, and to any common eye may be ſeen to be nothing but the groſſe Antinomy of the old Libertines.

The Anabaptiſts.

Theſe innocent ſcruples of tender conſciences only about the grounds of Pedo-baptiſme, whither have they now led ſome millions, not of the worſt of our people? See we not, that without any leave ſo much as asked of the Magiſtrate, very great numbers of Churches are erected by them, of formall and avowed Anabaptiſts.

The Libertines.

Theſe ſpecious and popular Invectives againſt Tyrannie and Perſecution; thoſe plauſible Harangues for a liberty onely to examine, without prejudice, what was proponed under the name of a Divine Truth; whether, at laſt, hath it carried multitudes who eſteem themſelves among the moſt rationall of men? Have they not opened, in the midſt of our ſtreets, the old Pantheon *of Paganiſh* Rome; *reſolutely aſſerting an abſolute Freedom for* Turks, Jews, Pagans, Papiſts, *and*

if

if there be any Worse Religions, not onely to live in all quietneſſe among us, but to be permitted, without any Diſcouragement, to follow their Conſciences; and ſo to employ themſelves daily, in the moſt advantagious places; private or publike, With ſo much art and diligence as they can uſe, to draw all the World toward their Wicked Profeſſions?

And not to run out upon all the reſt of our old renewed Errours, that ſo much-extolled Independency, Wherein many Religious ſouls for the time do Wander, Which is the chief hand that opened at firſt, and keepeth open to this day the door to all the other Errours that plague us: What is it elſe but a Limb, or rather, the large half of the Body of old Brownism? as its own Patrons confeſſe, a middle Way betwixt the Reformed Churches and the Browniſts; the ſame Way which Morellius *(ſeduced by the* Dutch *Anabaptiſts) did labour to bring into* FRANCE; *but by* Beza *and* Sadaell, *in two Generall Aſſemblies, it Was ſo fully confuted, that to this day all the Churches there do deteſt it: Yet* Bolton *and* Brown *Would needs bring it into* ENGLAND. The Independents. *Apologet. Nar.*

Theſe two are the known Fathers of Engliſh *Independency; men whoſe Inventions cannot be much loved, for their authors ſake, when they are well known. Among all the Proteſtant Divines that ever* ENGLAND *bred, I doubt if any have been more ſcandalous either in life or death, then the two former, as their chief followers are forced to acknowledge. Few Prelaticall men have gone beyond* Brown *in Profanity, from his Youth to his Old-age: And* Judas *himſelf Was no more abominable then* Bolton *in his death.* *Robinſons Juſtif. p. 50.*

I have oft marvelled how the Invention of ſo infamous Authors could be entertained by men of underſtanding, eſpecially ſince God did openly brand that their Conception with the Marks of his Diſpleaſure, not onely in its Birth, but in all the paſſages of its Life, Wherever yet it hath ſet foot on ground.

The fruits of Bolton *and* Browns *Independency at* Amſterdam *have been ſo eminently ſcandalous, that its own friends can finde no cover of excuſe for them.* *Apologet. Nar.*

Edwards Antapol.

The Divisions and Rents that sprang from the same root when it was planted in some better ground, at Arnhem *and* Roterdam, *have been no lesse unhappie and bitter.*

But that which demonstrates the Genuine Nature of this Plant, is its fruits in New-England, *where, without any Incumbrance from without or from within, having all the Advantages Civil and Ecclesiastick which could be wished; it got leave to put out its full strength: In a short time there, it brought forth such a multitude of grosse Heresies and Divisions, as did threaten not the Churches alone, but the Civil State also with a totall Ruine.*

If our Hopes of it here may be much better, for any of its fruits which yet we have tasted, wise men will pronounce.

3. By their increase.

The third Character wherewith the Finger of God hath stigmatized the Errours of this place, is, Their Incredible encrease: It can hardly be shewn where Errour, in so short a time, hath made so great a Conquest: For however, as I am informed, all the Fowls that yet have made their Nest in the last Branch whereof we did speak, may easily be numbred, being no ways so many as some would make them; yet if ye look upon the Whole Tree in all its Branches, it will be found to have drawn under its shadow a marvellous multitude of Creatures. These last four yeers, it seems, more people here have made Apostacie to one Errour or other, of their own accord, without the violence of any Persecution, then in all the Reformed Churches together for an hundred yeers and above. Errour of it self is of no such conquering strength, did not the Justice of God give men over to be captivated by its Delusions.

4. By mens neglect of their Cure.

The fourth Demonstration of a Divine Judgement in our Errours, is this, That though they have been universally acknowledged and regrated, yet to this day their effectuall Cure hath been well neer universally neglected. It is now not Moneths, but Yeers, since upon the faithfull Warning of the Lords Messengers, all men, every where, have joyned to acknowledge and to professe their displeasure at the spreading of Errour over the face

face of this Land : No Societies more full of these Complaints then the three most Considerable, The two Honourable Houses, and The Reverend Assembly : But yet, after all these Regrates, What reall stop hath been made to the Current of this over-flowing Deluge?

These are a great part of our Judgements; which the godly, in the days of Humiliation, and when else their hearts are looſed to mourn, do deplore. Yet here is our Comfort, That, in answer to our Supplications, the Lord hath stirred up the hearts of those who have power effectually to minde that which we are confident will prove the Remedy of these and many more of our present Evils; I mean, The setting up, without further Delay, of the Lords Government in his own House, over all the Land. Our comfort and hope.

The whole Government being transmitted from the Assembly, and looked upon by both Houses with a gracious Aspect, and sundry Votes already past upon the chief parts thereof; it is certainly expected, that in a very short time the whole Frame shall be erected, and not onely be accompanied with the joyfull Acclamations of this Land, and of all the Churches abroad; but also filled with so much Grace and Power from the presence of the Lord, as shall prove an heavenly Attractive, without any need of humane violence, to draw the spirits of those who for the time do most dissent and oppose, to its admiration and love. Waiting and praying for the sight of that happie day,

I rest,

Thy Servant,

in the Lord,

R. B.

A Sermon preached before the Right Honourable the Houſe of Lords, *July* 30. 1645.

ISAI. 63. 17.

Lord, why haſt thou made us to erre from thy ways, and hardned our hearts from thy fear? Return for thy ſervants ſake, the Tribes of thine Inheritance.

IN this and the two next Chapters, we have a heavenly Conference and Dialogue betwixt Chriſt and the Church of *Iſrael*, in the time of her affliction in *Babel*. *The Diviſion of the Chapter.*

The Dialogue hath Three or Six parts: Three Queſtions of the Church, and Three Anſwers of Chriſt.

In the firſt verſe of this Chapter, we have the firſt Queſtion and Anſwer. The Church, about that time of the Captivity to which this part of the Prophecie relateth, was much oppreſſed with many Enemies. God, after all his wrath, begins to ariſe, and take order with them who long had devoured her; eſpecially with *Edom*, the neereſt and moſt bitter Enemy of *Jacob*. When ſhe ſees the ſudden and unexpected Vengeance on *Edom*, admiring who could be the *The firſt Part.*

author and worker of it, ſhe propoſes the Queſtion, Who he was that had deſtroyed *Bozra*, the principall City of the *Edomites*, and was marching in his great and glorious ſtrength from the Land of *Edom*, the ſervice there being ended, to other of the Enemies Countreys.

Unto the Churches Interrogation, Chriſt anſwers, That it was he himſelf, who now, by his works, was demonſtrating the truth of his ancient promiſes, and ſhewing the might of his power to ſave his people from the Enemies oppreſſion.

The Doctrine. Obſerve, *When the Church hath wreſtled long with her enemies, and is ready to faint and give over; on a ſudden, Chriſt, the King and Captain of the Hoſt of* Iſrael, *comes down, and breaks the ſtrength of the prevailing enemy; to the Church her great admiration.*

The ſecond part of the Chapter. The ſecond part of the Dialogue is in the next five verſes. The Church finding it was her Lord and God who was begun to take vengeance on her enemies; before he go, ſhe is deſirous of more conference with him, and propoſes a ſecond Queſtion, Wherefore his Garments were red, as if he had been treading a Preſſe of red wine?

The Lords Anſwer is, That the ſet time of his Vengeance upon her Enemies was come: That though her ſtrength was gone, and among all her friends there was none able to ſtand againſt her foes; yet he alone would do it, and by his own Arm had deſtroyed already ſome of them with ſo great a ſlaughter, that all his glorious Raiment was ſtained with the blood of the ſlain.

The firſt Doctrine. Hence obſerve, firſt, *When the condition of the Church is moſt deſperate upon earth, then is the day and hour of her certain redreſſe from heaven.*

The ſecond. *The Church, deſerted of her ſelf and all men elſe, hath one faſt friend, who alone is worth many Ten thouſands, able to draw her out of all deeps.*

In

In the day of the Lords anger, Wo to all the enemies of the Church. When the Lord begins to trample them in the Wine-presse of his Indignation; if there were no more but the dashing of their bodies in pieces, the watering of the ground with their blood, and the staining of the garments of their killers therewith; if no more followed, it were well to them: But they must drink after death in the Cup of the everlasting fury of the Almighty, as *John* comments it, *Rev.* 14.10. *They shall be tormented with fire and brimstone for ever and ever.* *The third.*

In the third part of the Dialogue from the seventh verse, the Church finding her Deliverance sensibly begun, but not accomplished (for though *Edom* was destroyed, yet *Babel* was sitting like a Queen over the Nations, and most over the rubbish of desolate *Jerusalem*) she turns her self to her present Redeemer, and most humbly supplicates him to perfect what he had begun, To deliver her fully from the great burdens both of sin and misery that yet lay upon her. This Prayer is set down in the remnant of this Chapter, and all the next; whereunto a large and gracious Answer is returned by Christ in the 65 Chapter, thorow the whole. *The Subdivision of the third part.*

The first part of the Prayer is Thanksgiving, from the seventh to the fifteenth. *Its first member.*

To prepare their hearts for petitioning, they lay out before the Lord the great goodnesse which he of old had bestowed on the house of *Israel*, his wonders in *Egypt*, his glorious works at the Red Sea and in the Wilderneſſe, the constancy of his kindnesse, notwithstanding their Rebellion and vexing of his Spirit: Though sometime he punished them for their sins, yet he never left them, for the glory of his Name, and the Multitude of his mercies: Not onely *Moses his Shepherd*, but *the Angel of his Presence* went before them: *He was afflicted in all their afflictions; he bare them, and carried them in his arms* all these days of old thorow that howling Wilderneſſe. This is the Churches Preface to her subsequent Prayer.

Hence observe, first, *Thanksgiving is the meetest usher which a Pe-* *The first Doctrine.*

a Petitioner can have to the Throne of Grace. Praiſe perfumes the lips of a Supplicant; it ſweetens, it ſoftens, it opens the heart of a Seeker, and fits it ſingularly to receive all its deſires from God.

The ſecond. *The kindneſſe of God in the days of Moſes, and the moſt ancient times, is the Churches Inheritance to the worlds end.* All the favours of God regiſtred in Scripture, all the gracious experiments of the Saints in any time, in any place, are our Patrimony, ſerving as ruled Caſes, to ſtrengthen our Faith, Hope and Patience in the days of our adverſity.

The third. *The ſins of many perſons, remove not the favour of God from an elect Nation.* There is no interruption of the courſe of mercy towards a People, by the deſtruction of many particular perſons. Great Vengeance may be upon Thouſands, the carcaſes of Ten thouſands may fall in the Wilderneſſe, even of *Moſes* himſelf, and many of the Shepherds both of Church and State; and yet the Lord may graciouſly march on before his People, till he have ſetled them and his Ark in peace on his holy mountain.

The ſecond member. The Prayer conſiſts of Petitions, Complaints, Confeſſions of ſin, Profeſſions of faith, intertexed one with another, as the holy paſſions of the Supplicants hearts do mix them.

The matter of the 15 verſe. In the fifteenth verſe, there is a Petition backed with a Complaint. The Lord for a long time had left his People to the outrages of their Enemies, he had as it were left the earth, gone up to the heaven, and miskent all that the Enemy had done to his People: Now therefore they petition that he might be pleaſed to look down upon them from his holy and glorious Throne in the heaven. For this is the ſtrange faith of the Church, That ſhe is perſwaded ſo far of the power and goodneſſe of her God, at that very time when he hath left her to ſink in miſery for her offences; that even then, if he would but look back to her, in never ſo far a diſtance; if from the very heaven, the place of his retiring, he would behold her on the earth overwhelmed with miſery; ſhe is hopefull, if ſhe come but in the ſight of her gracious

gracious Lord, he would not fail to take pity upon her, and deliver her.

To this Petition, a Complaint is ſubjoyned, of the reſtraint and withdrawing of Gods ancient favours: Sometimes his zeal and ſtrength had been employed in her defence, his mercies, the tender bowels of his compaſſions, had been extended towards her; but now all ſenſe of ſuch favours were away.

The matter of the ſixteenth.

This complaint, leſt it ſhould irritate, is preſently corrected in the ſixteenth Verſe, with a fair profeſſion of Faith, above and againſt all preſent ſenſe, however the beams of Gods loving countenance did not then ſhine upon them, as at ſome other time; yet they profeſſe their certain perſwaſion, that God was their Father: Though *Abraham* and *Iſrael*, and all their bodily Progenitors ſhould caſt them away, as unworthy to be counted their children; yet they did beleeve, that their everlaſting and unchangeable God would not caſt them off, but deal with them as children, notwithſtanding of all their miſdeſervings.

The diviſion of the Text.

As for the words in hand in the ſeventeenth Verſe, the Church goes on to powre out her ſpirit before him, whom ſhe beleeves to be her Father, in the midſt of all her afflictions, in a new complaint and petition. The complaint hath two parts, and the petition is backed with a twofold Reaſon: The firſt part of the complaint is in theſe words, *O Lord, why haſt thou made us erre from thy wayes?* the ſecond part in theſe, *Why haſt thou hardned our hearts from thy fear?* The petition is, that he would *return* after his long abſence. The firſt reaſon, They were *his ſervants*; the ſecond, They were *his inheritance*. Let us conſider ſeverally, the minde and uſe of every part.

The Expoſition of the firſt part.

As for the firſt part of the complaint, four things in it would be exponed: Firſt, What are the wayes of the Lord. Secondly, What it is to erre from his wayes. Thirdly, How God makes men erre from his way. Fourthly, How the Church complains of this divine action. Three of theſe particulars are eaſie, and may be diſpatched in a word; but in the fourth there is no little difficulty.

What are the wayes of God.

For the first; Gods wayes here, are his Commandments, full of holinesse and righteousnesse; they are called Gods wayes, because of their similitude with his nature, that is, holy, righteous, and true: All his Commandments, and conversation, are according to the strait rule of his eternall, and essentiall holinesse, righteousnesse and truth. Secondly, Because they are his Law and Prescription, his will prescribes them as a way to his creatures to walk in. Thirdly, Because of his presence therein, in that way he is to be found: He is graciously present, and doth conntenance all that walk into it. Fourthly, Because of their end; they lead to God, they are the strait way, wherein the godly walk, till they come to the glorious palace above.

What it is to erre from these wayes.

The second point, To erre from these wayes, is to sin, as it is expressed *Psal.* 119. 8, 10. *To wander from Gods Commandments.* When we leave Gods way, and run out on the right hand, or the left, to the wayes of our own blinde minde, and corrupted heart; our false opinions against Gods truth; our wicked inclinations and actions against his holy nature, and revealed will; all of this kinde is our erring from his wayes.

How God makes men to erre.

But the great difficulty is in the third, How the Lord causes us to erre from his way: This would seem to make God the cause and author of sin, which is a horrid blasphemy against many Scriptures, and all reason. To eschew this huge, great, and intolerable inconvenience, sundry famous interpreters do translate the originall otherwayes then we read it; Not, *Why hast thou made or caused us to erre?* but, *Why hast thou suffered or permitted us to erre?* So *Junius* an excellent translator: And many hundred yeers before him, the *Chaldee* Paraphrast did render it, *Why hast thou cast us away to erre from thy wayes?* This interpretation is approved by very Learned and Orthodox Divines, who bring this reason for it, That the *Hebrew* word here, is not simply in the active form, not in *Kal*, but, as they speak, in *Hiphil*, whose signification oftentimes is not to make or cause, but to permit.

Indeed,

Indeed, this translation does eschew fully the difficulty; yet we dare not venture upon it; for as it seems it were to make too bold with the Scripture. The *Septuagens*, the ancient *Latin*, the *French*, the *Dutch*, the *Italian*, and many more, reads it just as our *English*, *Why hast thou made us to erre from thy Wayes?* The Grammaticall reason alleaged, hath no strength in this place; for be it so, that *Hebrew* Verbs in *Hiphil*, sometime have a permissive, and not an active sense; though this in any word is very rare, and the examples alleaged, are very questionable; yet for the *Hiphil* of the word in hand, we deny that ever it can be so exponed. A number of places of Scripture may be produced where *Hithah* must be actively exponed, as here our translators read it; but not one, if it be not this in question, can be brought where it may be exponed of a meer permission, without some agency and operation upon the erring and seduced person. We dare not trust the solving of so weighty a difficulty upon such a meer Grammatication.

The Grammaticall solution of some great men is not solid.

Holding therefore to our vulgar translation, *How does God cause us to erre, and yet is not the Author of our errours?* For the understanding hereof, we must distinguish sin, and the actions of God about sin. In sin there are two things, albeit inseparably joyned, yet essentially distinct; The *matter* and *form*, the *act* and its pravity; the one is naturally good, the other morally evill: This is visible in two actions whose matter is the same, but the forms much different: For example, the stoning of *Naboth*, and the stoning of *Achan*; the substance of the actions, the casting of the stones at both, was the same; but the forms was much different: The casting at an innocent man, and at a man condemned by God, and all *Israel*; the one form makes the stoning of *Naboth* an act of unjust murder, the other form makes the stoning of *Achan*, an act of just punishment.

The matter of a sinfull action must be distinguished from its form.

The acts, not of Gods will and decrees, for such concern not the words in hand, but of his actuall providence about the matter and form of sin, are many: The most considerable of these to us, for opening of our Text, are three:

Three acts of Gods effectuall providence about sin.

His

His concourſe, his efficacious permiſſion, his judiciall tradition, ſo to ſpeak.

1. An active concourſe in the ſubſtance of the action.

For the firſt, the Lord hath an actuall, yea, an active concourſe; and if you will, an efficiency in every act of ſin, ſo far as concerns the ſubſtance or matter of the ſinfull action; for *in him we live, we move, and have all our being*, in the moſt ſinfull action, the matter of the act being a poſitive entity, it muſt be a naturally-good thing, and have its exiſtence from the firſt and univerſall mover, the fountain of all Being: Without this kinde of efficiency and concourſe, *Shimei* could not have moved his tongue to curſe *David*, nor *Doeg* drawn his ſword to have killed the Prieſts: When God denies this kinde of concourſe, ſin is neceſſarily ſtopped: When he removes the life of the two Captains, they cannot oppreſſe *Eliah*. When God leaves the life, but takes away the ſight from the *Sodomites* at *Lots* door, and the power from the arm of *Jeroboam*, their ſin is impedite. When by ſuſpending of his operation, he takes away the will from *David* to kill *Nabal*, though both life and power remained, the ſin is marred. But for ſuch kinde of working in the ſinner, and cooperation with the ſinfull act, Sin uſes not to be aſcribed to God, more then the generation of living Creatures, to the motion and influence of the Heavens; for effects are denominate from the ſecond and particular cauſes, not from the firſt and univerſall, though their efficiency and concourſe be never ſo neceſſary and certain.

2. An efficacious permiſſion of the ſinfulneſſe of the act.

The next action of God about ſin is, his efficacious permiſſion; This for its object, hath not onely the matter and ſubſtance of the ſinfull act, but its very form, its pravity, its anomy, its ſinfulneſſe: This malignant quality is a morall evill, and ſo cannot be of God, who is goodneſſe it ſelf; its a privation and defect, and ſo the cauſe of it is not efficient, but deficient. If we would render the cauſe of a lame mans crooked walking, we behoved to diſtinguiſh betwixt the walking, and its crookedneſſe: The walking we would aſcribe to the motive power of the mans ſoul, and to the inſtruments of motion in his body; but the crookedneſſe of

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it, to the defect and hurt of ſome inſtrument of motion, not to the ſoul, or to the faculty, or to the inſtrument of motion, but onely to ſome defect of the inſtrument. So the ſinfulneſſe of ſin is to be aſcribed not to any efficiency of God, but to the deficiency of mans will, which now is ſinfull, and before ſin, was weak, as being made of nothing, and ſo able to change it ſelf from good to evill; but however, the ſinfulneſſe of ſin cannot be charged on Gods either efficiency or deficiency, yet it muſt exiſt by his free permiſſion; for nothing can have any exiſtence in the world, any being in the dominion of God, without the leave and permiſſion of the great Lord and Maſter of the World.

That action of God which in reſpect of ſin is called a permiſſion, in regard of the ſinner is a deſertion: This conſidered, will help to clear that which is the hardeſt knot in this matter; the efficacy that is ſaid to be in the permiſſion, and yet without all efficiency of the permitter, in the ſinfulneſſe permitted. This is really one thing with deſertion.

This matter which naturally is exceeding dark, will be beſt ſeen in ſimilitudes: When the Sun goes down, the darkneſſe of the night neceſſarily doth follow; when the Sun declines towards the Southern ſignes of the *Zodiack*, the Winter blaſts certainly do come on; the Sun the fountain of light and heat, in propriety of ſpeech, cannot be called the cauſe of the nights darkneſſe, or of the Winters cold; yet theſe, as ordinary and neceſſary conſequents, are uſually aſcribed to the Suns removall. Hot water removed from the fire, becomes incontinent cold: A ruinous Wall, when its props are removed, falls quickly to the ground: The coldneſſe of the water flows not from the fire, but from its own nature; the falling of the Wall comes from the naturall heavineſſe of the ſtones, which, without the impediment of a ſupporter, makes them to fall downward. It is ſo with God and man; when he withdraws, we become dark as midnight, cold like Ice, we fall to the ground.

Theſe effects neceſſarily follow his deſertion, but not as effects, onely as conſequents; their proper cauſe, is neither

in God, nor his removall; but in our nature, which of it ſelf, ſince the fall, is full of theſe malign qualities.

This kinde of providence about our ſins, is expreſſed in words of the active form, of blinding the eyes, and hardning the heart: Not that the Lord infuſes any darkneſſe or hardneſſe in the heart, which is not its own; but becauſe upon the removing of his illuminating and ſoftning Spirit, the naturall blindneſſe and hardneſſe of mans ſpirit, lurking before, doth then appear.

Gods third action, is a Judiciall Tradition.

The third action of God about ſin, is that which I did call, a Judiciall Tradition, when God, as a juſt Judge, puniſhes ſin by ſin; when he gives over men not onely to their own heart, but to the devil and his inſtruments to be tempted, ſeduced and drawn away to commit wickedneſſe with greedineſſe. However all the ſinfull actions be immediately the works of the ſinner alone, and the upſtirring to theſe actions be from the devil and his inſtruments, laying arguments, objects and occaſions, as baits and ſnares, in the way of the ſinner; yet God, as a juſt Judge, ſending out Satan and men as his executioners, and making way for mens own luſts to break out on the objects ſet before them: For theſe acts of Judgment, both in our Text, and oft elſewhere in Scripture, the cauſe of mens ſins, not as they are ſins, but as puniſhments of ſin, is aſcribed to him, 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 10. *Becauſe they received not the love of the truth, God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſions to believe a lye.* He was to ſend on them The Man of ſin, *Whoſe coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and with all deceiveableneſſe.* The committing of the ſin is aſcribed to the ſinner, who believes the lye; the tempting to it, is aſcribed to Satan and his Antichriſtian Inſtruments; the ſending out both of Satan and Antichriſt, the giving over to deluſion, is aſcribed to God the righteous Judge, by theſe means puniſhing former ſins. *Rom.* 1. 18, 21, 24, 26, 28. *The wrath of God is revealed againſt all unrighteouſneſſe of men; becauſe, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God: wherefore God gave them up alſo to uncleanneſſe. For this cauſe God gave them up to vile affections. God gave them over to a reprobate minde.*

minde. The ſinfull acts flow from the reprobate mindes and vile affections of the ſinners; yet God the Judge is thrice ſaid to give them up to theſe their own ſins. *Rom.* 11.8. *God hath given them the ſpirit of ſlumber, eyes that they ſhould not ſee, and ears that they ſhould not hear to this day. Let their Table be a ſnare, a ſtumbling-block, and a recompence to them: Let their eyes be darkned, that they may not ſee.* 2 Chron. 18.22. *The Lord hath put a lying ſpirit in the mouth of theſe thy Prophets.* Many ſuch places there are, where God, as a righteous Judge, is made to give over ſinners to the devil, to other wicked men, to themſelves, to be led in more and greater ſins, as puniſhments of the former.

Thus far Proteſtant Divines do go; and all the acts which any of them aſcribe to God about the cauſation of ſin, may be referred to one of the three named: All which ſtands well with the holineſſe of his Nature, and extreme contrariety to ſin. The *Papiſts* and *Arminians* do ſlander us moſt unjuſtly, as if we did blaſpheme the holy Lord, in making him the author of ſin: All of us ever have abhorred ſuch Doctrine: We never aſcribed to God more acts of providence about ſin, then the moſt clamorous of our enemies themſelves expreſly have done. The three forenamed acts, by *Bellarmine* and *Arminius* are attributed to God, in as ample and unadviſed expreſſions as ever fell from the Pen of any of our approved Divines.

Proteſtants are unjuſtly accuſed for making God the author of ſin.

I grant, the Libertines of old, and their children the Antinomians this day, do caſt out on this ſubject many abominable Blaſphemies: but theſe were ever deteſted by all Orthodox Proteſtants, as the vomit of the father of all lyes and blaſphemies; which makes us the more to marvel what theſe men can mean, who lately here, under the name of M. *Archer* a famous Independent in his time, have printed the worſt and groſſeſt of theſe Blaſphemies. Surely, if ſuch kinde of Doctrine be entertained by any of that Party, our Diſputations will not ſtand long at Church-Government; but the world will be confirmed in that opinion which ſome wiſe men long ago have given out, That Independency was not

This is the blaſphemy of the Libertines, and of M. *Archers* book, juſtly burnt therefore.

so much loved for it self, as for somwhat else, A liberty, without censure, to vent such Doctrines as the conscience of Orthodox Divines will never be able to hear with patience. But in this I will not enter: The zeal of the whole Assembly and both the Honourable Houses against the blasphemous Heresies of that infamous Book, doth quiet and secure our mindes herein.

Why doth the Church complain of these acts of God about her sins?

The fourth word to be exponed, is the Interrogation and Complaint, *Why hast thou made us to erre?* The Church being now before God, and laying hold on his fatherly compassions, pours out before him the troubles of her heart. That which troubled them most, was their sins and obstinacie in Rebellion, which they complain to the Lord had befallen them in his great wrath, through his deserting of them, and giving them over to be led away by their own lusts, and Satans tentations. This part of Gods wrath upon them, in punishing their sins with more blindnesse, and making them erre farther from his ways, was their greatest misery, the true cause of all their outward plagues, and a greater plague then all the rest; as we may see in the sixth of this Prophecie, where the Lord, for contempt of the Prophets Ministery, doth punish the body of that people with Spirituall Judgements, and makes their heart fatter, their minde blinder then before: And from this Spirituall evil, he makes all their Temporall desolation to flow, as out of its proper Fountain. Of this misery the people here complain to God, not to lay their sins off themselves, on the Lord; but to witnesse their deep sense of them, as coming on them through Gods just desertion, and deserved judgement: Not to upbraid the Lord with their miseries, but to spread them out before his feet, as their onely hope from whose hand alone they expected a remedy.

The first Doctrine. The godly pour out all their complaints in Gods bosom.

From the words thus exponed, observe, first, *The children of God, in their worst estate, are so familiar with their heavenly Father, as to pour out in his bosom the complaints of whatever misery lies upon them.* At this time, as appears by the words both before and after, the peoples condition was exceeding hard,

hard. *We are all as an unclean thing; our iniquities, as the winde, have taken us away. Thou haſt hid thy face from us, and conſumed us, becauſe of our iniquities.* His zeal, ſtrength and mercifull bowels ſeemed to be reſtrained towards them; yet they come before him: and that which troubled them moſt, their wandring from his ways, they ſpread it out before his feet, as the matter of their chiefeſt complaint.

The truth of the Doctrine may be ſeen, *Lam.* 4. 1. *Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us; conſider and behold our reproach.* In all the Chapter, and the whole Book, there is a familiar complaining to the Lord of all their miſeries. *Moſes* and *Aaron*, in all their tribulation, run to the door of the Tabernacle. *Jacob*, at the ſide of the foord *Jabbuk*, in his great fray for *Eſau*, betook himſelf to weep and pray. *David*, in his preſent danger of ſtoning by his own men, comforted himſelf in God. *Hezekiah* ſpread out before the Lord the railing of *Rabſhakeh*; and, after his deſperate ſickneſſe, turned himſelf to the wall to pour out his heart to God. The examples of this practice are innumerable. *The Proof hereof.*

The Reaſon of it is, *The Saints intereſt in God*: He is their Father. Poor children in diſtreſſe, whither ſhall they go, but to their father? Neither ſin nor miſery will annull that more then naturall relation, that ſupernaturall Paternity and Filiation. Though God clothe himſelf with a cloud in his anger; yet faith will make the ſoul, with *Moſes*, run thorow the fire and darkneſſe to him. The Prodigall, in the midſt of his miſery, reſolves to return to his father. The Spirit of Adoption, in our hardeſt times, will make us cry, *Abba, Father.* This reaſon is uſed in the ſame place, ver. 16. *Doubtleſſe thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us.* Verſ. 19. *We are thine; thou never bearеſt rule over them.* The next Chapter, verſ. 8. *But now, O Lord, thou art our Father; behold, ſee, we beſeech thee, we are all thy people.* *The Reaſon.*

The Uſe is for our Encouragement to continue this practice with all earneſtneſſe and perſeverance. If there be any means to draw down a bleſſing from the heavens on a diſtreſ- *The Uſe.*

ſed Nation, it is the prayer of the Saints: This is the hand that hath drawn up this ſinking Land from the pit of ruine; that hath ſet our feet on that Rock of ſafety whereon now we ſtand. Whatever difficulties are yet before us, by this means, or none elſe, will they be gotten overcome: Though all other ſhould give over this holy exerciſe of Faſting and Praying, or turn it in a ſinfull and provoking formality; yet it behoves us to keep it on foot, remembring both the expreſſe command of the Lord, *Call on me in the day of thy trouble, I ſhall deliver thee*, Pſal. 50. Lam. 2. 19. *Ariſe, cry out in the night, in the beginning of the watches pour out your hearts like water, before the face of the Lord; Lift up your hands towards him.* And your own viſible experience: As no people have ſown more plentifully this pretious ſeed; ſo none have already reaped more evident fruits thereof: Be not weary of this good work, untill all our deſires be accompliſhed.

The ſecond Doctrine. Sins are heavier then afflictions.

In the next place obſerve, That the chief part of the Saints complaint to God, is of their wandrings from his wayes. *Their ſins are heavier to them, then all their afflictions.*

The Proof.

This is proved from divers Scriptures, *Pſal.* 38. When the Prophets trouble was great, *Nothing ſound in his fleſh, The Arrows of the Lord ſticking in him, Gods hand preſſing him ſore*; yet the chief burden whereof he complains, was his ſins, verſe 4. *Mine iniquities are gone over my head as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.* Pſal. 40. 12. *Innumerable evils have compaſſed me about, but mine iniquities have taken hold on me*; for them he was *not able to look out, his heart failed him: Daniel c. 9.* complains of the heavy wrath and curſe that was powred out on *Jeruſalem*, and of ſo great afflictions as had befaln to no Nation under Heaven; yet the firſt, chief, and longeſt part of his complaint is, of the ſins of their Kings, of their Princes, of their Prieſts, and whole Land.

The Reaſon.

The reaſon of the Doctrine, *Sin is the greateſt evill*, its the fountain of afflictions: *Affliction cometh not out of the duſt; trouble ſpringeth not out of the ground:* Sin is the root

of

of it. Alſo ſin is moſt contrary to the nature of God: Wrath and trouble, even the greateſt, the very torments of Hell, are not ſo; for they are according to his juſtice. The godly therefore, who weigh things aright in the juſt ballance of the Sanctuary, eſteem their ſins much heavier, and more grievous evils, then any they can ſuffer for them.

The uſe is for our inſtruction: Let our complaints be rightly ordered, and our ſorrows rightly placed: Beware to ſpend the moſt, or beſt of thy ſenſe, on thy ſufferings: Beware to pour out the vehemency of thy paſſion, the bittereſt of thy ſorrows on calamities, either private or publike. The firſt fruits, the flower, the firſt-born of thy grief, muſt be reſerved for the chief evill. The naturall and kindely children of God, will have more ſorrow at their heart for the ſins of the Land, then for the deſolations thereof: What ever poverty, diſgrace, pain, can befall their perſon, the very wrath of God, ſuppoſe the torments of Hell, will not be ſo heavy, ſo bitter, ſo troubleſome to them, as their ſins, the cauſe of all theſe evils. *The Uſe.*

The third obſervation, *Gods puniſhing and judiciall hand in our ſins, is their aggravation, and increaſe of their bitterneſſe:* For this is the head of the Churches complaint, That God had cauſed them to erre from his wayes. *The third Doctrine.* Gods hand in our ſins, encreaſeth their bitternes. An Objection anſwered.

It is true, the Saints in Scripture draw comfort from ſome acts of Gods mercy about ſin, as from his gracious directing of its act to a good end. Upon this ground *Joſeph* comforts his Brethren, that not they, but God had ſent him down to *Egypt*: That their ſelling of him, which they intended for evill, God had ordered it ſo, that it did become the mean of all their preſervation. Alſo Gods prediction of ſin in ſundry Scriptures, is made a ground of contentment: *All this was done, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled*, is a common place of comfort againſt the treaſon of *Judas*, and the wickedneſſe of the *Jews*. Likewiſe the Apoſtles, *Acts* 4. quiet their minde on this meditation, That *God in his eternall counſell, had determined what* Herod *and* Pilate *in time had done in crucifying of Chriſt*. Of ſuch acts of Gods mercy about

about our ſins, we ſpeak not, be they temporall, be they eternall; but of the acts of his juſtice and wrath, puniſhing ſin by ſin. From theſe actions of God, we can draw no comfort; but they aggravate the weight of our ſins, and increaſe our grief.

The Proof. The miſcarriage of *Abſolon*, his rebellion and inceſt, could not but grieve *David*; but to increaſe his grief, 2 *Sam.* 2. 10. God tells him, *I will do this thing before all Iſrael, and before the Sun*, in that terrible viſion, *Iſai.* 6. the Lord, to demonſtrate his wrath againſt that people, ſendeth to them a meſſage full of anger, *Make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy.* Their excæcation was in it ſelf a grievous evill; but it was more grievous, when it came as a plague from an angry God. *John* 12. 39. Gods blinding of their eyes, that they could not beleeve Chriſts Word, is brought as an aggravation of their ſin, and of the anger of Chriſt againſt them, ſo far, as he went from them, and hid himſelf.

The Reaſon. The reaſon of this is, That theſe acts of God proceed from wrath and juſtice, puniſhing former ſins. Again, they are the means to make ſin more ſinfull, the perſon being given over to be carried headlong by his own luſts, and Satans tentations. Thirdly, The puniſhment of ſin in this degree, is much ſorer, then if it had been a ſimple ſin, as in the ſixth of *Iſaiah*, and elſewhere it appears. No marvell therefore, that men of awakened conſciences make it a chief part of their complaint and grief, *That God had cauſed them to erre*: This being a ſigne of wrath, and increaſe of guiltineſſe, and a forerunner of greater puniſhment.

1 *Uſe* for Caution. The uſe is firſt for Caution, To beware of that dangerous errour of taking comfort and encouragement from Gods judiciall hand in our ſins, that is, to glory in our ſhame, and to joy for what we ſhould be ſad. It is to caſt off our ſelf the burden of our ſin, to whom alone it belongs, on God, *whoſe eyes are purer, then to behold iniquity.*

2 *Uſe* for Counſel. Secondly, It ſerves for Councell, to make it our chief grief in our mourning, That we have faln under ſo heavy diſpleaſure, as to be ſcourged with the worſt of Gods Rods:

Of

Of all the Arrows in Gods Quiver, this is the moſt venemous, To be given over by God to ſin; this comes from a ſpeciall wrath, and is a preſage of very great miſery following. When Gods ſpirit ſtirred up *David* to number the people, it came from his anger againſt *Iſrael*, and was a forerunner of the deſtroying Angell: The blinding of the peoples eyes, *Iſaiah* 6. and *John* 12. is made an antecedent of a nationall ruine. When ever we feel this to be our condition, it ſhould be the matter of our moſt mournfull complaint.

The fourth obſervation will clear the third; it is this, *The godly, when their eyes are opened to ſee their wandrings, they are ſingularly affected with their judiciall errours*, As here the Church mourning and praying to God, for ſin and miſery, begins her complaint for theſe errours, into which, by Gods anger and judgement, ſhe had faln. *The fourth Doctrine.* Judiciall errours are moſt lamentable.

Old *Iſrael* by Gods judgement, had faln in the grievous errour of civill diſcord, which coſt in two dayes, the eleven Tribes, the lives of fourty thouſand men; and in the third, proceeded very near to the extirpation of the twelfth Tribe. When the hand of God was lifted off them, and they began to look back upon their actions, *Judges* 21. 2. they weeped ſore before the Lord, and complained to him of the great miſchief wherein they had faln: Though the injuſtice and obſtinacy of *Benjamin* had been the immediate cauſe of the diſſention; yet they pittied their Brethren, ſeeing it was the Lords judgement upon them all, that had made that breach in *Iſrael*, Verſe 15. *Ephraim* in his pride would needs rebell againſt the houſe of *David*, and have a King among themſelves, and Altars of their own making at *Dan* and *Bethel*; God in juſtice gave them over to theſe ſins of continuall ſedition and idolatry, till they were totally ruined: He gave them a number of Kings in his anger: *Hoſ.* 8. 11. *Becauſe Ephraim hath made many Altars to ſin, Altars ſhall be unto him to ſin.* But when the Lord gave repentance to *Ephraim*, ſee how much they are grieved, aſhamed, and confounded, for their madneſſe, wherein by the judgement of God, they *The Proof.*

were made long to go on, *Jere.* 31. 18. *I have heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Surely, after I was turned, I repented; and after I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh; I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I bore the reproach of my youth.* The *Jews* were plagued of God with a horrible blindnesse of minde, and obstinacy of heart, so that they rejected the Gospel, crucified the Lord of Life, and remain in Rebellion to this day: But when the Lord shall take off the vail of their eyes, and they begin to see their judiciall errours, their madnesse against Christ and the Gospel, wherewith God in justice did plague them; their grief for it will be extraordinary, as it is set down, *Zach.* 12. 10. *They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his onely son; and shall be in bitternesse for him, as one is in bitternesse for his first-born.* 2 *Thes.* 2. The Churches of the *Gentiles* are in Gods justice, many of them given over to strong delusions, to beleeve Antichristian Lyes; but when God begins to open their eyes to see these delusions, their grief and indignation for them is so great, *Revel.* 17. 16. *That they hate the whore,* who did seduce and bewitch them; *They make her desolate, and naked: They eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.*

The Reasons. The Reasons of this Doctrine, are the same which of the former, especially the second. The singular and extraordinary guiltinesse, that is in these judiciall errours, the blinded soul sees them not, while God in mercy remove the cloud, and send in his light; but then the lightned soul beholding the horrible wayes wherein it hath been wandring, such wherein it would never have walked, had it not been led by a powerfull Divell, set on by the permission and commission of a just God; Seeing in these sins a just God, a wicked Divell, and a heart stirred up by extraordinary temptations; by this horrible back-sight is affrighted and amazed, till Faith in the infinite mercies of God, doth calm and settle it.

The Use. The Use is for admonition: Beware of judiciall errours; very often they are never pardoned, but bring on destruction both

both temporall and eternall: 2 *Theſ.* 2. 11. They to whom God ſends ſtrong deluſions, are damned: *Iſai.* 6. 11. When God ſhut the peoples eyes, and made their heart fat, the Cities were waſted, and the Land made deſolate: Before *Ephraim* and *Juda* recovered themſelves from that ſnare of rebellion, and came to the repentance ſpoken of, How many hundred thouſands and millions of them did periſh both temporally and eternally? And theſe few whom the Lord bringeth to ſee, and mourn for their judiciall errours; How great is their grief? How much do they wiſh to have ſeen in time their madneſſe, that they might not ſo much have been plagued therewith?

But what are theſe judiciall errours which we would beware of? Search the Scriptures, they will make you wiſe in this very neceſſary point of knowledge.

Civill diſcord a Judiciall errour.

For your uſe, I ſhall point at ſome: Firſt, *Civill Diſcord* is a ſin, and a great judgement; a ſin to the authors and fomenters; a judgement to all, as well the innocent as nocent party. *Iſai.* 19. 2. God puniſheth the ſins of the *Egyptians* with his plague, *I will ſet the Egyptians againſt the Egyptians and they ſhall fight every one againſt his brother, and every one againſt his neighbour; City againſt City, and Kingdom againſt Kingdom; and the ſpirit of Egypt ſhall fail in the midſt thereof, and I will deſtroy the counſel thereof.* The ſame is the Judgement of *Iſrael*, Zech. 11. 6. *I will no more pity the inhabitants of the Land, but I will deliver the men every one into his neighbours hands, and into the hands of his King, and they ſhall ſmite the Land: and out of their hand I will not deliver them.* This is the great Judgement that long hath lien upon us; the removall whereof, hath been one chief end of all our late Humiliations: The longer it lieth on, it is the heavier; and all good men have the more reaſon to cry, with *Abner* to *Joab*, upon a leſſe occaſion; *Shall the Sword devour for ever? Knoweſt thou not that it will be bitterneſſe in the later end? How long ſhall it be ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren?*

Our Malignant enemies, the onely authors of our preſent

Diſcord, have to this day denied us Peace in any juſt and ſafe terms. If obſtinately they will go on in their refuſall, we muſt proceed in our neceſſary defence, and crave from the God of Peace, that which theſe children of Diſcord do deny unto us; and expect from the heaven ſuch a Bleſſing upon our Armies, as may force them to permit us to live in quietneſſe, when they are no more able to cauſe troubles. In the mean time, all ſhould continue their prayers to God ſo to frame the hearts of all men, that the weary and fainting Kingdoms may be delivered, ſo ſoon as is poſſible, from our deſtroying Diſcords.

Reaſons why Peace is to be wiſhed.

The eſtate of the world abroad, doth much call us to theſe thoughts. The Deſolations of *Germany*, farther from any appearance of remedy this hour then Six and twenty yeers ago, ſhould be exemplary unto us.

If our mindes be ſo large as to look ſo far abroad, we may ſee the whole Weſtern Kingdoms in a greater danger to be ſwallowed up with the great Turkiſh Leviathan, then they have been at any by-gone time: We know his head this day is bent towards Chriſtendom. The Bulwarks which were wont to keep him out on both hands, upon our Eaſt in *Germany* and *Hungary*, upon our South in *Italy* and *Spain*, are ſo much brangled with Inteſtine and irreconcileable Diviſions, that we have juſt ground to fear what this his Weſtern Enterpriſe may produce. *England* oftimes hath felt the heavie ſtroke of the *Conſtantinopolitan* Arms, when they were in much weaker and far leſſe terrible hands then at this day they are.

If theſe ſeem far-fetched fears, look over to the condition of our neereſt Neighbours. While we are ſleeping, and ſo ſoon as awakened, fallen a deſtroying our ſelves, the French King hath ingroſſed a greater and more formidable power then any of his Anceſtors for ſome hundred yeers did enjoy. No wiſe man of this Iſle will cloſe his eyes at the extraordinary and diſproportionate encreaſe of that Eſtate.

If there were no other reaſons, I believe convincing Demonſtrations might be drawn from the preſent eſtate of the world

world abroad, why we ſhould continue to make it one of our ſpeciall prayers in all theſe meetings, That we might be ſo happie as quickly to ſee in all the three Kingdoms a juſt and well-grounded Peace. But if the fatall obſtinacy of our enemies will force us to fight it out; with all chearfulneſſe let us go on, till they be brought ſo low, as not to be willing anymore to reject the equitable Offers of both Parliaments.

Moſt of all, Peace among our ſelves would be kept with care.

Onely let this Judiciall Diſcord be extended to as narrow bounds as is poſſible: Let all our Diviſions be with the enemy; among our ſelves let the bond of brotherly Union continue and encreaſe. All that are for God, and the welfare of the Kingdoms in the three Nations, are united together by the Covenant and Band of God. All Ages ſhall call them Curſed, who, for any imaginable advantage, private or publike, ſhal labour to put aſunder what God hath conjoyned. The greateſt advantages cannot make up the loſſe which unavoidably will follow upon ſuch a Breach. We know the Prince of Diſcord, that reſtleſſe Spirit, will always be ſtirring up in the humours both of evil and of good men the ſparkles of that fire of jealouſie, envie, malice, diviſion, wherewith he enflamed the nature of all men, in the breſt of our old father the firſt *Adam*: But all the members of the ſecond *Adam* ſhould make it not ſo much their profeſſion, as their reall care and conſcience, to ſmother theſe ſmokes, whenever they appear. I am ſure, the wiſedom, the piety, the peace of minde, the love to his Countrey, of that man is greateſt, who with the greateſt ſedulity employs himſelf to caſt water on every beginning, on every the leaſt appearance of any Diviſion which Satan may be working in the Parliament, in the Aſſembly, in the City, in the Army, and, above all, betwixt the Covenanted Nations.

Eccleſiaſtick Anarchy is a Judicial error.

The ſecond Judiciall Errour I point at, is, *Our Eccleſiaſticall Anarchy*: How great a ſin and how great a judgement this is, a little conſideration will clear. By this wofull Anarchy, Chriſt is robbed of a great part of his Kingdom in this Land. That in all the Churches he hath in *England*, there ſhould be no Government at all, no execution of Diſcipline:

That not one of his Officers ſhould have liberty to keep from his Table, to caſt out of his Houſe thoſe that are moſt grievous to him : That for ſo long a time he ſhould be hindered to keep ſo much as one Court in any of his approved Churches in *England*; it is very ſtrange.

The abſurdity thereof.

Which of you would not take it for agrievous offence, if any would offer to hinder the ſitting of the high Court of Parliament at *Weſtminſter*, or wherever elſe they pleaſe to ſit ? Yea, it would be taken for a hainous crime, if any in the Citie or Countrey ſhould ſtop the leaſt Committee, or meaneſt Officer whom either of the Houſes would ſend out in their name to execute any of their Orders. What man in the Kingdom would not take it for an intolerable affront, if his ſervant were hindred to cloſe his doors, and keep out of his houſe his enemies, or any whom he diſcharged his preſence ? What grief would it be to any of us, to be forced to ſee daily, not onely walking in our houſe, but ſitting at our Table, thoſe whom leaſt we deſire ? We may judge, by what we feel in our own breſts when ſuch offences are offered to us, what ſenſe Chriſt will have of them, when his Spirit ſo long hath been pierced with them. That Chriſt, by whoſe power alone this Parliament hath ſitten ſo long time, in deſpite of their enemies ; by whoſe goodneſſe it is that their Sentences get any where obedience ; who makes their wills in their private States and Families to be regarded ; That he ſhould not be ſuffered to keep any Court in his own Church, That his Orders ſhould not be regarded in his own Houſe, it is very ſtrange.

Can any man ſay that ever before it was thus in *England* theſe Fourteen hundred yeers, or if it be longer ſince there were any Churches in this Land ? Was ever a totall Anarchy heard of in any Churches, before theſe late times ? Is it any where elſe this day to be ſeen in the world ? Doth the Pagan, the Turkiſh, the Popiſh Princes or States, refuſe or delay to grant Eccleſiaſtick Government to the Churches that live in their Dominions ? Have the Independents, the Browniſts, or the Anabaptiſts, or any of the Hetorodox Societies

cieties among us, wanted their own Government, ſince the firſt hour of their ſelf-erection?

The Judgement of this Errour appeareth in three Circumſtances. It is demonſtrate to be a Judgement and Plague.

Firſt, That it is evident to all.

Secondly, That it were moſt eaſily amended.

Thirdly, That it is ſingularly hurtfull.

The Evidence of it may be ſeen in the confeſſion of all. The greateſt and moſt unreaſonable Sectaries, will not deny but every true Church ſhould be without all delay inveſted with Government: And if you will ſpeak with the men who moſt have and do retard the erection of the Government deſired, they will profeſſe their true intention and deſire to ſee the Church-Diſcipline eſtabliſhed. For this evil Anarchy hath been ſo oft, by ſo many of Gods faithful ſervants witneſſed againſt, that now its defended by none.

Concerning the ſecond, The facility of its erection, it is as clear: For, I pray, who are the men that will take it upon them to impede it? Can we at this preſent, or could we for ſome yeers complain of the violence of a ſeduced Court? Can the blame be caſt on any Popiſh or Prelaticall Faction? Will either Browniſts or Anabaptiſts profeſſe their deniall to us of what they long ago have taken to themſelves? Who then muſt anſwer to God for our ſhamefull Anarchy for ſo long a time?

The hurt of it is too too perſpicuous. Whoſoever will lay the Sword, the Peſtilence, and all the Calamities that deſtroy the Land, on our delay to build the Houſe of the Lord, ſhall have for him the Prophet *Zechariahs* direct Warrant, *Zech.* 8. 10. *Before theſe days, there was no peace to him that went out or came in, becauſe of affliction: For I ſet all men every one againſt his neighbour.* And if we indeed believe, It is not the ſtrength of men, but the Lord Chriſt who ſetleth troubled Kingdoms; What hope can we have, that he will ever ſettle our State, ſo long as his Church lies neglected, in ſo wofull a confuſion?

Beſide outward Judgements, this Errour is the cauſe of the

the greateſt ſpirituall Miſchiefs. The hedge of Diſcipline lying level with the ground, makes open doors, yea, invites and calls for all the devouring beaſts to prey on the Flock of Chriſt. From this it is, that ſo many thouſand ſouls are permitted to periſh eternally in ignorance, in profaneneſſe, in Hereſies, in damnable Sects, without the leaſt controll, or any mans endeavour to reclaim them. So long as the Law permits no Paſtor in *England* to exerciſe his Paſtorall charge on any perſon, he may well weep and mourn when the devil in his ſight plucks away numbers of his Sheep: but with his Shepherds Crook, with the Ordinance of Chriſts Diſcipline, to hold off that Lion it is not in his power.

It is not onely the paſſionate deſire of all the Reformed Churches abroad, of all the godly and Orthodox Party at home; but alſo their confident expectation, That the Honorable Houſes, without further delay, will at laſt ſet up the walls of the Houſe of God, who now is going on apace, by ſo many Succeſſes, to ruine their enemies, and to ſettle the ſtate of their affairs, much according to their hearts deſire. The neglect of this piece of Thankfulneſſe may provoke the Lord to repent him of his favours, and to call back in one day, what he had been giving in many.

False Doctrine is a Judiciall Errour.

I point but at one other Judiciall wandering, that which uſually and properly goeth under the name of Errour, the word of our Text; *falſe Doctrine, contrary to the Ways of Gods Truth.* That Errour is a ſin, and a Judiciall one, infliſlicted by God as a puniſhment of former ſins, we may ſee in divers Scriptures: 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 10, 11. *Becauſe they received not the love of the Truth, for this cauſe God gave them over to ſtrong deluſions to believe a lye.* Here Errours are Judgements which God puts Satan to bring on men, for their coldrife entertaining of the truth. And how grievous a Judgment Error is, this and other Scriptures clear: Here it is made a cauſe of damnation, *That they might all be damned who believed not the Truth.*

The *Socino-Remonſtrants* have taught our new Maſters to extenuate much, and at laſt to deny the ſinfulneſſe and danger of

of Errour. They would hide the Vipers ſting, till the pretty and beautifull worm be once taken into the boſom, where a little warmed, it makes it quickly appear how innocent and harmleſſe a creature it is.

They tell us, that all ſin is in the Will, but the ſeat of errour is the minde: Is not the minde the moſt high and divine facultie of the ſoul? Is not the corruption of the beſt things truely worſt? The mindes pollution with the darkneſſe of errour, is eminently contrary to the light and truth of the divine nature. Errour is a dangerous evil and the cauſe of damnation.

Againſt this greateſt of errours, the excuſing of all errours, we ſhould minde the truth of God, who cannot lye: In the place cited, errour is made the cauſe of damnation; elſewhere the Apoſtle tells us, That falſe Doctrine eats up and kills the ſoul, *as a Canker*, Gangrene or Peſt doth the body. 2 *Tim.* 2. 17. Alſo falſe Teachers are called *Ravening Woolfs*, who tear and rent in peeces the ſouls of the ſeduced, *Acts* 20. 29.

The Apoſtle *Peter* is in the ſame minde, 2. Epiſtle 2. He tells us the condition of falſe Teachers, *They bring in damnable Hereſies, their wayes are pernicious, their diſtruction is ſwift, their damnation ſlumbereth not*: It is as certain, as was the damnation of the Devils, of the old world drowned in the deluge, of the *Sodomites*: All this is *Peters* Doctrine.

And this he had from his Maſter Chriſt, *Matth.* 7. 15. *Beware of falſe Prophets.* When they have the faireſt ſhew of piety, he that knows the heart pronounceth, *They are but ravening Woolfs.* Matth. 15. 14. *If the blinde lead the blinde, both ſhall fall in the ditch*: If we beleeve the Lord, a falſe Teacher doth not onely deſtroy himſelf, but draws with him all his blinded Scholers into the ditch of the ſame perdition.

1 *Cor.* 12. 25, 27. The Apoſtle tells us, That *the Church is the Body of Chriſt*, and that Schiſmaticks make *a Schiſm in Chriſts Body*: that is, they rent his Body in peeces: they who crucified him would not rent his ſeamleſſe Goat; but Schiſmaticks can tear his skin, cut his fleſh, rent his Joynts and Members in peeces. The nature of Shiſm.

What is meant by liberty of conscience, and what is the true sense of their language who require a toleration of Errours.

Understand the Language of them who plead for liberty of errours; If you beleeve Christ, or the Doctrine of *Paul* attested by *Peter*, and the rest both Prophets and Apostles, whom I have not time to cite; they invite you to permit ravening Woolfs freely to enter your streets, and tear in peeces all they meet with; to come into your Houses and Chambers, to devour the souls of your best beloved Wives, Sons, Daughters, Servants, and Friends; to lead them all out to a ditch, and drown them; yea, which is infinitely worse, to cast them all in the pit of damnation. These were hard expressions if they were our own, and not our betters, I mean Christ, and his Apostles.

Would you permit any whom you were able to hinder, to rent the Coat of Christ, to tear his Skin, to cut his Flesh, to pull his Arm from his Shoulder? These are the things which too long have been done in our eyes: It were good that such impious actions, so grievous to God, so hurtfull to the souls of men, at last were stopped.

Would you count him a gracious parent, who should wink at any who brought into his house Vipers and Serpents, Woolfs and Tigers, to destroy his Children? who brought in Boxes of Pestiferous Cloaths, and boldly spread them on the Beds, and about the Table where himself and family were to sit and lie? This is the office and onely exercise of all our Hereticks and Patrons of errour.

All Christians are obliged to the uttermost of their power to quench the fire of Heresie and Schism; but above all other, we have a speciall obligation for this duty; we have lifted up our hands to the most high God, vowing to him, in the sight of all the Neighbour-Nations, our endeavours in the sincerity of our hearts, to extirpate Heresie and Schism, and whatsoever shall be found contrary to sound Doctrine, without respect of persons. If herein we should be negligent, would not God avenge our solemn Perjury? If respect to any person should make us ever think of breaking that Bond, and expressely contrary thereto to begin once to tamper about the toleration of errours contrary to sound Doctrine;

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what might we and the poſterity expect from the hand of the God of Juſtice and Truth?

Let none object the example of the *States of Holland* to us in this point: The example of *Holland* anſwered.

For firſt, Where the Will of God is evident, the contrary example of men is not to be regarded.

Secondly, The evill example of one *State*, is not to be followed againſt the good example of all other Proteſtant Churches.

Thirdly, Theſe *States* were never bound to God by ſuch a Covenant as we are.

Fourthly, In theſe *States* there hath been a connivance at Errours by particular Magiſtrates for their private gain; but to this hour, was ever any Sect among them, ſo impudent, as to offer a Petition for a Toleration by Law, when lately ſome aſſayed to do it, they repented ever ſince of that folly.

Laſtly, Hath not the Magiſtrates connivance without any Legall Toleration, ſo much multiplied Sects among them, that for this one thing (though for many other their renown be great) they have become infamous in the Chriſtian World? The godly among them have been more grieved with this ſcandalous ſin, then with any other; and thoſe of them who are wiſe, do ſee their State this day in greater civill danger by this peece of impious policy, and from it apprehend greater hazards of commotion and ruine to their *State*, then from any other ground: However, the connivence there at Sects, and the multiplication of Sects by connivence, is no wayes comparable to what is among us: but we truſt that this kinde of our erring from the wayes of God, is near a period, and ſhall ſhortly be remedied.

So much for the firſt part of the Churches complaint, followeth the ſecond, *And hardned our heart from thy fear*, Not onely they had wanderd out of the wayes of God in divers by-paths of ſin; but in theſe ſins they were obſtinate, their hearts had been hard, the fear of God moved them not The ſecond part of the Complaint exponed.

to repentance: This was a worſe evill then the firſt; ſo they acknowledge the hand of God, and his ſore puniſhment into it, and of this make a heavy regrate to him.

What is hardneſſe of heart.

The originall word that here is turned *harden*, is but once elſe in Scripture, *Job* 39. 16. ſpoken of the *Oſtridge*, *She is hardned againſt her young ones*, or is removed from her young ones; ſhe leaveth them alone. It ſignifies two things, To harden, or to remove. Some of the beſt *Latin* Interpreters tranſlate it here, Why removeſt thou our heart from thy fear? The *Chaldee Paraphraſt* takes it ſo alſo: but the *Septuagint*, and the moſt of other Interpreters old and late, tranſlate it as we have it: The words will bear both; but for ſhortneſſe I ſhall hold with our own tranſlation onely.

Hardneſſe of heart is a metaphor, importing the wilfull, obſtinate, and rebellious diſpoſition of the Spirit againſt the fear and counſells of God: As hard Wax refuſeth the ſtamp, while the ſoft receives the impreſſion: A hard Wall puts back the Ball, which the ſoft Ayr letteth paſſe through: A Corſlet of Iron holds out the Bullet, which the ſoftneſſe of the fleſh receiveth.

How God hardeneth the heart.

The way how God hardneth the heart againſt his fear, is not by infuſion of any hardneſſe, or any evill diſpoſition into the heart, but by three other actions.

Firſt, By withdrawing of his gracious ſpirit, whoſe operation it is that ſoftens the heart, and makes it plyable to the Counſells of God, and ſubject to his fear: *Deut.* 29. 9. *The Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive, eyes to ſee, and ears to hear, to this day:* That all they had ſeen in *Egypt* and in the Wilderneſſe, had not pierced their heart with the love and fear of God. Of this wonderfull hardneſſe of the peoples heart, this reaſon is rendered by *Moſes*, God had not given them a heart to perceive.

Beſide this negative action of God in hardning the heart, he hath two poſitive; He gives over the heart to its own naturall hardneſſe, that it may be more and more hardened: Thus, *the Lord hardened Pharaohs heart:* He not onely withheld all the gracious motions of his ſpirit from him, but let his

his naturall obſtinacy work it ſelf to an acquired habit of hardneſſe: And ſo, what was before naturall, became habituall and judiciall. This is the judgement ſpoken of, the twelfth of *John*, from the ſixth of *Iſaiah*: *Make the heart of this people fat*; for their rejecting of my former counſels, let their rebellious heart become worſe and worſe, ſo that thy miniſtery do them no more good.

Thirdly, God gives over the heart judicially hardned by it ſelf, to Satans tentations, whereby it becomes more blinde, dead, and hard, then of it ſelf alone it could be: *He ſent evill Angels among the Egyptians*, for this evill among others, *Pſal.* 79. 49. 2 *Theſ.* 2. He ſends out Satan to work with Antichriſt; for to blinde the eye, and harden the heart with ſtrong deluſions.

By all this you underſtand, why the Church regrates it here to God, That he had hardened her heart from his fear: Hardneſſe was naturall to her heart, yet they found Gods judgement, cauſing in juſtice that naturall evill to increaſe upon them.

From this part of the Complaint, obſerve, *Judiciall hardneſſe of heart, from the fear of God, in the times of trouble, is the godlies chiefeſt grief, and complaint to God.* The troubles and calamities of the Jews were great at this time, their ſins alſo were great: But behold, here they complain to God more then for either their calamities, or other ſins, that God had hardened their heart from his fear, in the midſt of all their ſins and judgements. The Doctrine Judicial hardneſſe is the godlies greateſt grief.

This was it that made the Prophet *Jeremy* amazed, *Jere.* 5.3. *O Lord, thou haſt ſtricken them, but they have not grieved; thou haſt conſumed them, but they have refuſed to receive correction; they have made their faces harder then a rock.* *The Proof.*

The Reaſon why this condition of a people is moſt lamentable, is firſt, It is a preſage of deſtruction: When ſtrokes humble not a people, and ſoften not their heart to the fear and obedience of God, then it cometh to this, *Why* *The firſt Reaſon.*

ſhould ye be ſtricken any more. After correction is obſtinately refuſed, then cometh rejection. 2 *Kings* 17. 18. God is very angry with the ten Tribes, and removes them out of his ſight; the great cauſe we have, *Verſe* 14. *They hardned their necks, like the necks of their fathers, that did not beleeve in the Lord their God.* This ſame was the cauſe of the ruine of *Jeruſalem, Jere.* 19. 15. *I will bring upon this City all the evill that I have pronounced againſt it, becauſe they have hardned their necks, that they might not hear my words.* Jere. 26. 29. *The Lord hath rejected and forſaken the generation of his wrath,* becauſe *they had hardned their necks, and did worſe then their fathers.*

The ſecond Reaſon. Another Reaſon. This is ſuch an evill as draweth on eternall perdition after temporall ruine. *Rom.* 2. 5. *After thy hardneſſe and impenitent heart, thou treaſureſt up to thy ſelf Wrath againſt the day of Wrath.* There is a treaſure and heap of everlaſting wrath from this hardneſſe. *Heb.* 3. 7. *To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation: Wherefore I Was grieved With that Generation, and ſware in my wrath, They ſhall not enter into my reſt:* Meaning ſuch grief and anger in God againſt this evil, as holds out of heaven.

The third Reaſon. Thirdly, This ſin hath extraordinary malignancy in it, though neither eternall nor temporall wrath followed on it: The hand of an angry God, of a working devil, and high degree of corruption, are into it: in its production, all theſe three have place. Before any be hardned in ſin, and become obſtinate, the corruption of the heart muſt be great, and highly advanced: Alſo Satans hand is in the blinding of the eyes, and ſearing with the hot-iron, in ſtupifying and making ſenſleſſe the conſcience of the hardned perſon: and God, as a juſt Judge, putting on the executioner, muſt be alſo about this action. So that this hardning is very oft the ſigne of a Reprobate to whom God ſhews no mercy: *Whom he will he hardens, and ſheweth mercy on whom he will ſhew mercy*; albeit its not ever ſo, as in our Text and elſewhere. God hardens the hearts of ſome for a time, whom thereafter he ſoftens,

and

and to them ſheweth mercy: Yet oft, being the caſe of Reprobates, and ever very like to it, and in it ſelf a degree to that wofull condition; it affrighteth the godly, when they ſee it in themſelves or others, and becometh a great part of their complaint to God.

The Uſe is for Exhortation, That we be carefull to grieve and complain to the Lord for this great evil, wherever we ſee it, in our ſelves or others. Not onely the moſt faithfull of Gods Watch-men in all the three Kingdoms, but alſo thoſe of the people who by the anointing of God have the eyes of their minde opened to ſee the Spirituall eſtate of their own or their neighbours ſouls, bear witneſſe with an unanimous teſtimony, that notwithſtanding all the Judgements which lie on the Land, yet this hardneſſe of heart is greater and more univerſall then ever they have ſeen it. This cannot be but the hand of God, adding this Spirituall Plague, as the worſt and greateſt of all our evils: For this we have great reaſon to mourn, and intreat the removall of it above all our Woes. *The Uſe.*

Motives to the Duty we need no other, then the Reaſons of the Doctrine.

If thou finde this evil crept in thy heart, as I doubt not but it lodgeth ſenſibly in ſome hearts that hear me; or though the Lord had bleſſed thee with the tender heart of *Joſiah*, to mourn for the ſins and calamities that are already, and to tremble for what further is coming; yet if thou ſee this Miſchief proclaiming it ſelf in the countenances and lives of the moſt of thy neighbours, as truely an obſerving and conſcientious eye will remark too much of it, wherever he will look, even in the days and places of moſt ſolemn Humiliation, when hardneſſe of heart ſhould be baniſhed fartheſt away; this evil, I ſay, wherever found, in thy ſelf or others, ſhould be complained of to God: For having in it ſo much of an angry God, a buſie devil, and of a high degree of humane corruption; it being alſo a preſage and certain forerunner, if not remedied, of greater Temporal Judgements then yet we have ſeen, albeit we have ſeen and heard

heard of as much wo as our fathers in theſe Kingdoms have felt for ſome hundred yeers, though all their ſufferings were put together: Yet the hardneſſe of our hearts, if it continue, will make all we have ſuffered but the beginning of evils; yea, this hardneſſe of heart poiſons and envenoms all our ſufferings with a curſed quality. Peſtilence, wounds, ſpoiling of goods, death, are all ſanctified and ſweetned to a ſoftned heart; but to a hardned heart they are the firſt acts of a wofull Tragedie; there is a treaſure of wrath, and lake of fire and brimſtone at their end attending them.

If we were able, on theſe days ſet apart for this end, above all other, to attain the bleſſing of a ſoft heart, and the Judgement of a heart hardned by God removed, we would quickly be ſecure of damnation, we would becom certain of the removall of all theſe Judgements which have very long ſo heavily lien both on the Church and State, and on the backs, if not of our perſons, yet of many in whom our intereſt is great: we ſhould be aſſured of heavenly conſolations againſt all evils that for the time were on, or hereafter might befall us. Let it therefore be our earneſt endeavour to finde this bleſſing by the Word, by the Sacraments, by publike by private Prayer, by Reading, by Conference, by Meditation. At this time I will point at ſome Scripturall helps towards it.

The firſt cure of hardneſſe is, The embracing of the word by faith.

Firſt, believe the Word of the Lord. Gods Word is the means that ſoftneth the heart, like the Sun that melteth the wax, likethe Hammer that breaketh the ſtone, the Fire that ſoftneth the Iron, the watry cloud that moiſtneth the dry and parched ground. With all care and conſcience, ſet thy heart under the beams of that Sun, the ſtroke of that Hammer, before the heat of that fire, under the droppings of that cloud. The contempt, the neglect, the misbelief of this holy inſtrument of the Spirit, is a great cauſe of all the hardneſſe of heart we ſpeak of. *Heb. 3. To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart. Take heed there be not in any of you an evil heart of misbelief.* Who will not hear the voice, or doth hear, but with an evil heart of misbelief, they harden their heart. The Word, which ſhould melt them as the Sun doth Wax, hard-

hardneth them, as the Sun doth Clay: that Word which to the believer is the loud voice of the Trumpet of God, to waken them when sleeping, to quicken them when dead; becomes, to the unbeliever and careleſſe hearer, the ſong of a pleaſant voice to ſing them aſleep, and to keep them ſleeping. To ſuch, the moſt powerfull Miniſtery of a Prophet, of an Apoſtle, of Chriſt himſelf, ſerveth to make the heart more hard, and fat, and dead then it was before; as from the ſixth of *Iſai.* and twelfth of *John* it is manifeſt. That which to the faithfull is a quickning Spirit, to the misbeliever is a killing letter: What to the one is the power of God to ſalvation, to the other is but as ſounding Braſſe and a tinkling Cymbal. Let it therefore be your earneſt endeavour, in all holy exerciſes about the Word, private or publike, be it preaching, or reading, or conference, to embrace it with an honeſt heart, with all attention, reverence and faith.

Particularly, embrace and lay up in thy heart the promiſe of a ſoft heart, as it is ſet down, *Ezek.* 36. 26. there the people of God were in a worſe condition then we yet: The fury of the Lord was ſo far kindled againſt them for their ſins, that they were caſt out of their Land, *they were ſwallowed up on every ſide*, as it is in the third verſe: *They were taken up in the lips of talkers, they were an infamy of the people*, and the reproach of the Nations, and for all that were not reformed, but continued to profane the Name of God, and to encreaſe their provocations, in the midſt of all their Judgements: Yet, even then, the Lord doth promiſe, *For my own Names ſake, not for your ſake, will I do this: A new heart will I give you, and a new ſpirit will I put within you: I will take away the ſtony heart out of your fleſh, and will give you an heart of fleſh.* Let this Word, as a pickle of good ſeed, be laid up in the heart, it will in time break up to good fruit. This is a part of the new Covenant, as appeareth from *Jer.* 31 and 32. and *Heb.* 8. which belongs to us, as to any other, which we would embrace, humbly waiting till the Lord perform it to us.

Eſpecially the promiſe of a ſoft heart.

A ſecond help to ſoftneſſe of heart, will be a Catalogue of

The ſecond Cure of hardneſſe is, A clear ſight of ſin.

ſins for which we ought to mourn; for ſoftneſſe of heart is either the ſame thing, or proceeds in a great part from grief and ſorrow for ſin; as hardneſſe of heart and impenitency are the ſame, or are always conjoyned. *Thou from thy hardneſſe or impenitent heart.* The tenderneſſe and melting of *Joſiahs* heart, was his mourning for the Lands ſin: The ſoftning of the *Jews* heart from their long Plague of induration, is, when they are weeping and *in bitterneſſe* for their ſins, *as one for his firſt-born.* The clear ſight of ſin being a help to grief, ſorrow and repentance, muſt be ſo towards the ſoftneſſe of heart. The ſpeciall end of theſe ſolemn Humiliations is for regiſtrating, in clear and legible letters, in the hearts of the godly, the ſins both of the Land, and of their own perſons. The Tables of our conſcience have been ſo oft impreſſed with theſe Types, that I need no more but to remit every one to the books of their breſts: There you may read in capitall letters the cauſe of our Woes, the matter of our Mourning.

What are the ſins of the Land.

While *the Lords Candle did ſhine over our head, and we waſhed our ſteps in butter*; while to all the Neigbour-Nations for a great number of yeers we were a wonder of Proſperity; and with abundance of all Temporall bleſſings, we had likewiſe plenty of the Goſpel; How did we meet the Lord? Great numbers of all ranks and eſtates, were obſtinate in Idolatry, and known Papiſts. Of them who profeſſed the Truth, how many were altogether void of knowledge, void of fear, without any conſcience of God? The moſt did pollute the Service and Church of God with manifold Superſtitions, and Prelaticall Tyranny, perſecuting all who had the leaſt zeal to oppoſe their Corruptions: True Piety was mocked. The Sabbath, by publike Authority, profaned. Covetouſneſſe, Pride, Oppreſſion, Pampering of the fleſh, Uncleanneſſe, like a flood, did overflow the Land. In theſe very times, when the Lords patience is broken off, and he from heaven is revealing his wrath againſt our wickedneſſe; yet where is our Repentance? How many have an ear to hear more what the preſent Rods of God do ſpeak, then what his

his former Favours? How many Popiſh and Prelaticall ſpirits have yet mourned for their old ways? How many upon conſcience have left any of the named abominations? How great an addition have we made to our old heap of ſin? How much have we put to our old treaſure of wrath? Rather then to be reclaimed from their ways, Hath not a great part run to the Sword, and covered the Land with more innocent blood, more Rapines and Raviſhments then this Iſle did ſee for many Ages together?

Many whom Gods mercy hath ſeparate to the right hand, How do they ſtill provoke the Lord, continuing without grief for their old ways? And ſundry of them who profeſſe moſt Piety, advancing the old unhappie way of this Land, an affectation of ſingularity and difference from all the Reformed: The bitter Potions of Gods Judgements, have not yet purged out this very evil humour of many ſtomacks. The vain ſpirits of this Land made that the peculiar glory of *England*, which was truely her peculiar infamy, and proper unhappineſſe, and the ſpeciall grief of the moſt godly in the Land: The gloriation of theſe light ſpirits was, That *England* did excell all other Reformed Churches in their Epiſcopacy and Service-book: alſo, That the moderation of their King and Prelats was ſuch, that Romane Catholikes might enjoy a ſober liberty among them, without all hazard of perſecution. Is this humour diminiſhed to this day? Or, with a little change, doth it not predomine yet in many? We muſt ſtill excell all other Churches in our Government: In place of Epiſcopacie, we will have a new Popularity: Juſt the old Browniſm of the rigid Separatiſts, covered with the new name of Independency: For after triall it will be found, that this new and *Middle way* (as it is called) is really the extremity of the moſt rigid Separation: That it is not a *ſemi*, but a *ſeſqui*-Separation: That for the ſmaller crotchets of the Browniſts which they lay aſide, they adde more errors, of a worſe ſtamp, which the old Separatiſts were wont much to deteſt.

Epiſcopacy and Independency flow both from one fountain.

Independency is not a *ſemi*, but a *ſeſqui*-ſeparation.

But to ſweeten our new eminency above other Proteſtants,

it must be mixed with a *Liberty of Conscience*; not that, for which the King, Court and Bishops were lately so much cryed out upon, The toleration onely of Papists, or any one false Religion; but a full and Catholike Liberty for all imaginable kindes of false Religion; much more then to this day was ever required, either in *Amsterdam*, or *Poll*, or *Transilvania*, or any where else where the licentiousnesse of erring, in the great wrath of God, hath been permitted to dwell. Upon these things the godly would look, not as upon a subject of talking, or an incentive of wrath and indignation against the persons of any; but to be matter of heart-grief, and mourning to the Lord in our secret places.

In the end of this Catalogue of publike sins, thou wouldst have annexed a Register of thy personall provocations: When thou hast brought the Candle of Gods Word and Spirit within thy own house, and within the Cabinet of thy own brest; doubtlesse thou wilt behold so many abominations, both fleshly and spirituall, that will be just cause of watering thy Couch with thy tears, and pouring out thy heart before the face of the Lord, if thou wer able, in tears of blood.

A third Cure of hardnesse is Motives to fear.

A third help to softnesse of heart, is Motives to fear; for this hardnesse of heart proceedeth as from misbelief and impenitency; so also from security: wherefore in our Text it is opposite to fear: *Why hast thou hardned our hearts from thy fear?* And *Josiah*, so soon as tendernesse of heart came upon him, began to fear and tremble. So Motives to fear, are helps to softnesse, and cures for hardnesse of heart: Of these, I point shortly but at three: The Judgements of God on others: His Mercies to us: And, if these affect not, The Wrath yet to come on us.

1. Judgements on others.

For the first, we would oft remember the examples given us by God: Who ever thou art; thou hast thy patern from God: Be thou a Church-man, a Citizen, a Knight, an Earl, a Duke, a Prince; how hath the Lord scourged divers of thy Coat lately before thy eyes? wounded, killed, impoverished, disgraced

disgraced many, and put others to stand this day on the brink of ruine and worldly misery? *Were they the greatest sinners on whom the Tower of Siloam fell? Or they whose blood Pilate mingled with their Sacrifice?* The Lords remark on these Judgements was, *That except we repent, we shall all likewise perish.* The late Judgements which God hath inflicted on many of thy quality, are loud words to thee, that thou mayest fear and tremble; that thy heart may melt within thee for thy sins, lest the Lord make thee a spectacle of Judgement to others, who by the miseries of others wouldst not be taught to repent.

Again, Remember the great mercies of the Lord: *For there is mercy with God, that he may be feared.* The speciall means whereby *Nathan* softned the heart of *David*, after it had been long hardned in sin with *Bathsheba*, was a Catalogue of Gods mercies towards him, 2 *Sam.* 2. *I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; I made thee King over Israel; I gave thee thy masters house; and if that had been too little, I would have given thee more: Why hast thou despised my Commandment?* The ointment of mercy is most softning of a gracious heart, when it groweth into hardnesse: Its good to have a Register of Gods favours both to the publike and thy person. Consider all that the Lord hath done lately for the Church and Kingdom. If the Malignant party had prevailed, (as once they were too like to have done) if their Tyranny in Church and State had been established by the overthrow of the gracious party in the whole Isle; what wofull days should have come upon us and the posterity? That the Lord hath heard our Prayers, and from the heaven hath done so many and so great things for us: That we are in so fair a way to have both Church and State setled according to Truth and Justice: That for our persons, we have been guided aright in the common Cause; that when so many greater, wiser, better then we, have been given over to the counsels of their own hearts, to joyn with the enemy, for their own disgrace and wrack: That the Lord should have kept thy heart strait, and holden thee on that side wherein was Justice,

2. Mercies on us.

Truth, and the blessing of God: That in that party the Lord hath taken any service at thy hand, when many, more able, and as willing, have been unserviceable: That thy life, thy limbs, thy estate, are preserved, when this service hath cost many their life, some their limbs, some their estates. These and the like favours would be remembred, for the softning of our heart.

3. Greater Judgements yet coming.

In the third place, if neither Judgements on others, nor mercies on thy self, will move; consider what remediless evils may shortly be the reward of so great a contempt. When *Nabals* heart grew like a stone within him, the hand of God did in a little time cut him off by death. When neither Judgements nor mercies bring a heart to fear, the Lord usually pours out the full Vials of his heaviest wrath. It is a fearfull thing to fall into the hand of that consuming fire. We would do well to be lifting up our eyes to that invisible Spirit whom the world cannot see; To behold his hand guiding all the wheels of publike and private affairs. Were our State much better setled then yet for a long time it can be; if he be miskent, he can cast down in a moment more then men can build in many yeers. If he be not feared and sought to, he will so crosse and confound the guides of Church and State, that when they are at the end of the Wilderneſſe, on the very borders of *Canaan*, he can bring them back to toil in the Wilderneſſe till they die, without so much as a sight of that *Canaan*, though once they had come very neer unto it. Albeit the publike did prosper, yet the fearfull wrath of God, for thy hardneſſe of heart, may light on thy person. *Achan* may be stoned to death in the valley of *Achor*, in the midst of *Israels* triumph. The misbelieving Prince in *Samaria* may see the Plenty, but be crushed, before he taste thereof. Thy hardneſſe of heart, if it remain, will ruine thee: What the fury and curse of an angry God hath ever brought on a miserable sinner in this life, think upon it, for shortly it may be thy portion; and, which is infinitely worse, the whole treasures of the wrath to come, a greater then ordinary condemnation, for thy impenitency & hardnes

of

of heart, if thou remain as thou art, cannot but fall upon thee.

The last help I propone, is Earnest Prayer. Sometimes all the former helps will not do it; for *the heart is desperately wicked*, and incredibly hard, like that of *Leviathan*, *Job.* 41. 24. *His heart is firm as a stone, as hard as the nether milstone.* When we finde it thus, shall we give over in despair? Not so: For there is yet mercy and power in God to make the rocks flow down, to melt the mountains, to dissolve the Adamant-stones. There is a Warrant, *Neh.* 9. once and again proponed, for the people of God to lay hold on Gods mercy and power, in the midst of their greatest Rebellion and Induration, *verse* 16. *Our fathers dealt proudly, and hardned their necks, and hearkned not to thy Commandments: But thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and mercifull; thou forsakest them not.* Also in the 29 verse, *They dealt proudly, and withdrew the shoulder, and hardned their necks, and would not hear.* Yet in the 31 verse, *Nevertheless thou didst not forsake them; for thou art a gracious and mercifull God.* A fourth Cure of hardnesse is Prayer.

What heart can be more hard and blinde then *Pauls*, when he made havock of the Church? yet the Lord made the scales to fall from his eyes, and put in his brest, in place of the stone, a most gracious, soft and spirituall piece of flesh. The spectacle of the greatest induration, the *Jews*, when the Spirit comes on them, their most obdured hearts fall to the greatest mourning, *Zech.* 12. Let it therefore be our care, in our greatest hardnesse, to lie at the Throne of Grace, to cry on still for this mercy of a soft heart; who knoweth how soon the Lord may hear and answer? When nothing else can help us, if he himself come down, all will yeeld to his power. When the King of Glory comes to assault the most stiff and best-closed heart, all doors are cast open to him, *Psal.* 24. 9. *He breaketh the gates of brasse, and smiteth the bars of iron in sunder*, Psal. 107. 16. When he puts his finger in the hole of the door, the bowels of the secure Spouse will shortly be moved for him, *Cant.* 5. 4. It must be our con-

continuall prayer, that the Lord would come to put away the hardneſſe of our heart, to enlighten it with faith, to melt it with repentance, to break it with fear; that ſo it may be a fitted Sanctuary for his perpetuall inhabitation.

The laſt part of the verſe exponed.

If time were not paſt, there are in the ſecond part of the Text, the Churches petition for the Lords return, ſundry things uſefull for the preſent occaſion. Look in a little upon the meaning of the words.

The returning of the Lord, is a metaphor taken from finite creatures, that go and come: But properly the Lord cannot move from place to place; for his Eſſence is infinite; he is eſſentially *omni*-preſent; God is every where, in the heaven, in the earth, in the Sea. *Pſal.* 139. *If I aſcend up unto heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, thou art there:* neither ſo onely, but he fills the heaven and the earth, *Jer.* 23. 24. *Do not I fill the heaven and the earth, ſaith the Lord?* But not ſo, as if when he filled all things, he could be within the circle of the higheſt heavens: 1 *Kings* 8.27. *Behold, the heavens, and the heaven of heavens, could not contain thee.* We have the reaſon in *Job* 11.8. The perfection of God is ſuch, that it is *as high as heaven, deeper then hell, longer then the earth, and broader then the Sea.*

But beware to conceive of this infinite and immenſe Eſſence of God, which is in all places, and without all places, as of a bodily ſubſtance; for God is a Spirit, and that of an infinite ſimplicity: take heed of all groſſe imaginations of him, leſt thou turn him to an idol of thine own making.

The zeal of the Court of *England* againſt *Vorſtius* hereſies.

Not long ago, *Vorſtius* and ſome of the Arminians in *Holland*, began firſt to brangle with their Problems, and thereafter, to deny with their poſitive aſſertions, theſe groundſtones of Religion. At that time, the zeal of *England* brake out, to the joy of all the Churches: Then the care of the King, and the very Prelats, was great, not onely to keep Hereſies, as helliſh vapours, out of *England*; but to have them ſuppreſſed among their neighbours in *Holland*, with all ſpeed. We hope it ſhall never be told to poſterity, that the zeal of this Parliament was leſſe againſt Errours at home, then the

Courts

Courts wont to be against that evil abroad. And however for the present there be nothing so sacred in the Divine Nature and Persons, which the boldnesse of Heretikes among us, arising onely from impunity, dare not wickedly profane; yet ere long we expect a remedy to this and many more evils.

The Returning whereof our Text speaketh, is not to be understood of the Divine Essence, Nature, Substance, nor of the Lords common Operations; but of his gracious Works, of his Mercy and Compassion, as we have it expresly, *Zech.* 1. 16. *I am returned to Jerusalem with mercy:* And *Jer.* 12. 55. *I will return and have compassion on them.* As a man in his anger turns his back, and goeth his way; but when reconciled, he cometh back: So the Lord, when grievously provoked with the sins of his people, for a time departeth to his place, hideth his face, withdraweth the signes of his favour: but thereafter, when appeased, he maketh his face to shine, and by his Spirit works graciously in the seduced and obdured heart: For this the Church here petitions, That the Lord would return, and make himself sensibly present to her, and by the gracious work of his Spirit, reclaim her from these errours, and that hardnesse of heart whereinto by his absence she had fallen.

The Ground whereupon the Petition is builded, is, Gods Relation to them, and their Interest in God: They were his servants, he their Lord and Master; as it is in the last verse: *We are thine; thou never bare'st rule over them: they were never called by thy Name.* Since the Lord had taken them to be his people to serve him, this was a ground to them, That he would not fully nor finally cast them off; but, for his interest in them, would return. This is cleared in the last words, his returning to them was not for any good was in them, but because they were *The Tribes of his Inheritance:* Among all the inhabitants of the earth, he had chosen for his portion the Tribes of *Jacob*, as the word signifies the Rods or Branches that sprang out of the Root of *Jacob*, for his peculiar possession: *Deut.* 32. 8. *When the*

Most high divided to the Nations their Inheritance, When he separated the sons of Adam; the Lords portion was his people, and Jacob the lot of his inheritance. Out of the whole world, he chose *Israel* for his peculiar portion; as it is in *Amos* 4. *Thee only have I known, of all the families of the earth.* Not for any good in them, but alone for his own love and good will; as it is, *Deut.*7.8.

Were not the time past, we would have enlarged these Observations:

Observ. 1. First, *The proper, the sovereign, the onely Cure of an erring spirit and hardned heart, is the presence, the return, the gracious entrance of God in the heart.*

2 Secondly, *When the Lord upon entreaty hath come into the heart, and begins to enlighten and soften it; he would be entertained with much love, humility, fear, care.* All in the heart that may grieve his holy eye, would be swept out, lest, if again he depart in anger, the last estate be worse then the first.

3 Thirdly, *A Land wherein the spirit of Errour and Induration doth predomine, cannot enjoy the gracious presence of the Spirit of Truth.* 2 Cor. 6. 15. *What communion hath light with darknesse? What concord hath Christ with Belial?*

4 Fourthly, *All who plead for a Liberty of habitation to erroneous spirits in this Land, require, in plain English, a Liberty, so far as is in them, to banish God out of* England.

5 Fifthly, *When by the judgement of God the spirit of Errour hath entred a Land, there is no putting of him out, but by Gods own Arm; for he is a great deal stronger then men.* Zech. 13. 2. It is the Lord who takes it on him to *cause the false Prophets, and the unclean spirit* that leads them, *to passe out of the Land.*

6 Sixthly, *Though the judgement of Erring and Induration cannot be cured but by the return of the Lord; though the subduing of the spirit of Errour and Obstinacie be the work of Gods hand: yet every good man, according to his place and calling; above all, the Nobles of a Land, and the Houses of Parliament, would employ their whole strength to help the Lord against that*

strong

ſtrong one. We tempt God, when we neglect to uſe the means for doing of that work wherein he hath the principall hand. Becauſe we live in God, Shall we not eat, and drink, and keep our ſelves from ſeen dangers? *It is the Lord that ſubdues our enemies under us*; therefore ſhall not our Souldiers fight? The Lords Spirit is the ſubduer of the ſpirit of Errour; therefore Aſſemblies and Parliaments need to have no care of this matter? When Satan reaſoned thus with Chriſt, *He hath given his Angels charge over thee*; therefore *caſt thy ſelf down headlong*: he replieth wiſely, *Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

Seventhly, *God will return for his ſervants ſake, in the moſt deſperate times: When Calamities have wracked the State, when Errour and Obſtinacy (and theſe Judiciall) lie on the ſpirits of a people; the faithfull expect, believe, pray for favour, upon the ground of their relation to God, ſtill remaining in the mids both of ſins and miſeries; they are his ſervants, and he their Lord.* The conſcience of a deſire to ſerve the Lord, is a Ground of hope in our hardeſt conditions. 7

Eighthly, *No hope of a deliverance by God in mercy from any Judgement, unleſſe we be willing to ſerve him as an abſolute Maſter.* The greateſt enemies of a State, are thoſe, who would evert or enervate the Relation of maſter and ſervant, between God and a people; for this Relation is the ground-ſtone of all the Protection, of all the Deliverance we may expect or pray for from God. Popes, Kings, Biſhops, have been ſtriving to be lords over Gods Flock; that ambition hath coſt all the three dear. Let Chriſt alone (by his own Laws, his own Officers, and his own Courts) have the full Spirituall and Eccleſiaſtick Government of his Churches: The taking of this from him, may ſpoil us of his protection. Thoſe men that are moſt carefull to vindicate the right of Chriſt, are beſt ſervants to the State; for they lay a ſure foundation of Chriſts favour and protection to that State wherein they ſettle Chriſt as the onely King, Lord and Maſter of the Church. 8

Ninthly, *Conſider the unexpreſſible benignity of God,* 9

chusing out among the children of sinfull and miserable men, some to be his own inheritance : That the Infinite and All-sufficient God, who hath need of nothing, and to whom all creatures can adde no perfection ; in all Ages should delight to have a possession and inheritance among men, as his peculiar treasure, they to be his, and he to be theirs; its a wonderfull love to men.

10 Tenthly, *Gods Inheritance, his peculiar People, his dearest Children, if they will venture on sin, they shall be sure of Plagues both Spirituall and Temporall, rather then any other people of the world:* For their sins are greatest, being against a most loving Father : It concerns him in honour and glory not to let them go with their scandalous trespasses : He would be blasphemed, if they went unpunished. *Thee onely have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish thee for all thy transgressions.*

11 Eleventhly, *The Spirit of Adoption, under great sins, and grievous punishments therefore, moves the children of God to lay hold on their priviledges for the melting of their heart, and bringing them to Repentance.*

12 Finally, *The sweetest exercise of a Christian, is the improving of the priviledge in hand, The making use daily of this mutuall Relation, We are Gods Inheritance, and God is our Portion.* A soul truely religious, must give it self up fully to be possest and filled by God, to be repleniſhed in minde, will, affections, memory, conscience, and every faculty, with the whole fulnesse of God, as an inhabitant, as a due, proper and onely heritor : On the other part, it will claim and lay hold by faith, on the power, the glory, the truth, the mercy, and all that is in God, as its own peculiar portion, as the onely heritage which either in earth or heaven it desireth to enjoy.

But being cut off by time from enlarging these things, I commend them and the rest to your meditation, and the blessing of God.

FINIS.

Die Jovis, 31 Julii, 1645.

ORdered by the Lords in Parliament, That Master *Baylie*, who preached yesterday before the Lords of Parliament in the Abbey-Church *Westminster*, it being the day of the Publike Fast, is hereby thanked for the great pains he took in his Sermon, and desired to print and publish the same; which is to be printed by none but such as shall be authorized by the said Master *Baylie*.

Joh. Brown, Cler. Parliamentorum.

I do appoint Samuel Gellibrand *to print my Sermon.*

ROBERT BAYLIE.